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Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

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THE FREE SCHOOL

Thus far the mythical democracy of the school has centered itself upon children.

There is, however, a democracy of the school that comprehends the **workers** with children as well as the children themselves.

Both teachers and pupils must be included in the conception of the free school; otherwise, distortion of the aim of education results.

The school system cannot teach and cannot vitalize democracy with children free and teachers enchained.

From article by

Prof. Edward C. Elliott

in this number

THE PROPOSED SUPERVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE NEW YORK SCHOOLS*

EDWARD C. ELLIOTT

University of Wisconsin

Recommendation II in School Inquiry Report

"That appropriate steps be taken to secure the creation of a Supervisory Council to be composed of the City Superintendent, all of the district superintendents, and a selected number of directors, principals of training schools, principals of high schools, principals of elementary schools, and representatives from the teaching staff in the various types and grades of schools."

"To this Supervisory Council should be given general powers and directions with regard to programs of study, and all other essential matters relating to the methods and standards of instruction. Until such a representative board is charged with educational responsibility, the city cannot hope to secure the most efficient service, nor will teachers be given a degree of freedom consistent with the effective performance of the duties given to them. In support of this proposition the following may be offered:

"(1) As already argued in this report, the effectiveness of the control of a school system is measured by the degree to which there is

provision for co-operation of all of those responsible for results. The chief evil of the existing scheme of control is to be found in the disinclination to utilize the experience of the great body of teachers and supervisors who always make up the advance guard of stable progress.

"(2) At the present time the extent to which the members of the teaching and supervisory staff (district superintendents, directors, and principals) are permitted to participate in the making of the internal policy of the school system is wholly within the personal choice of the City Superintendent or the Board of Superintendents. If participation is desired, it is requested or commanded. It is not one of the rights and obligations of the members of the teaching and supervisory staff. *A truly progressive educational policy within the school system requires that co-operation be legalized.* No school system fulfills its existence under a control that is feudal in character."

This is one of four major recommendations contained in that portion of the recent School Inquiry report dealing with the system of general supervision. From a constructive point of view, this proposal clearly outranks those presented in the other recommendations. These latter, however important, deal primarily with the mechanism of school control. The idea of the Supervisory Council relates to the fundamental constitution of the school system. Revolutionary tho this idea may be, it must be kept in mind that a crisis such as now exists in the development of public education in New York City cannot be successfully met by measures of the conventional sort.

The proposal for the creation of this Supervisory Council was formulated and presented only after a thorough, detailed consideration of the dominant factors of what is admitted to be the most complex educational situation in the world. It was not fabricated from personal or theoretical preconceptions. On the contrary, this Council appeared as a logical and practical solution of a very human problem of social control. That prob-

* NOTE:—My first inclination in the preparation of this article was to confine it to a consideration of the critical comments that my proposal for the organization of the Supervisory Council had evoked. However, after a careful examination of all of the so-called criticisms, there seems to be nothing to answer. Mere *ex cathedra* pronouncements by an irresponsible press do not constitute effective arguments. Moreover, as far as I am aware, no successful school administrator or supervisor, or no person of recognized professional or civic standing has taken serious issue with the proposal. I except, of course, Superintendent Maxwell's trenchant, an entirely natural, comment made in his letter to the President of the Public Education Association. Even tho he regards the proposed Supervisory Council "as a travesty on all common sense forms of administration," he does admit a generous "kernel of good." I have, therefore, concerned myself with a statement of the fundamental propositions included in the idea of the Council.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:—After Prof. Elliott's manuscript was forwarded to THE AMERICAN TEACHER there appeared in the New York newspapers the Board of Superintendents' formal reply to criticisms made of it in the School Inquiry Report. This reply, however, contains no new direct objection to the idea of the Supervisory Council.

lem was to establish in the school system a real working balance between the democracy we preach and the democracy we practise.

Within the few paragraphs at my disposal, I desire to consider very briefly three principal features of this Supervisory Council. *First*, its motive; *second*, its organization and operation; *third*, its inherent dangers to the supervisory and teaching staff of the public schools of the City of New York.

Motive: Our democratic ideal, if it is to persist, must be embodied in the institutions of our society rather than vaguely expressed in the commonplace epigrams of our language. What more appropriate institution for this embodiment than the public schools of our national city! Thus far the mythical democracy of the school has centered itself upon children. There is, however, a democracy of the school that comprehends the *workers* with children as well as the children themselves. Both teachers and pupils must be included in the conception of the free school; otherwise, distortion of the aim of education results. The school system cannot teach and cannot vitalize democracy with children free and teachers enchained. Thru a representative Supervisory Council a partial realization at least of the ideal of the democratic school is possible. It is the one agency that will permit the conservation and the constructive utilization of the best skill of teachers and supervisors for the benefit of schools and of children.

If the Supervisory Council, thru being an attempt to give reality to an ideal, is academic and theoretic, as recently charged by one of the arch-scientists of American education, then I must plead guilty to whatever the charge may mean. This ideal tho belongs to the "cloistered college," (quoting the aforesaid arch-scientist) and the cosmopolitan city alike. Without it the red blood of our democracy of education changes to water.

Operation: The Supervisory Council represents a practical ideal. If the Board of Education and the City Superintendent really want the supervisory

and teaching staffs to be organized in such a way as to provide for a larger and more effective participation in the making of the internal educational policies of the schools, this can readily be done. Because of the particular objections that Superintendent Maxwell has recently made to the Council proposal, to-wit, that it might be too large, that it might have functions that it could not well perform, and that such a form of school control is to be found nowhere else in America, it may be urged that we should revise our present estimates of his pre-eminent organizing ability and executive genius.

As has been pointed out, with adequate proof, in the Inquiry Report upon the system of general supervision in New York City, the Board of Superintendents and the City Superintendent, in so far as they exercise direct control over the vital relationship of teacher and pupils, have operated detrimentally to the accomplishment of the best results. A more effective organization would eliminate the Board of Superintendents and would place under the City Superintendent a direct and larger control over all mechanical and administrative affairs. To the representative Supervisory Council, of which the City Superintendent would be merely the executive head, would be transferred power and authority over all of the essential features of instruction.

My own conception of the Supervisory Council is not that of the "advisory" council, now being advocated for the New York City school system. A properly constituted Supervisory Council would consist of a permanent representative body of teachers and educational directors with *legalized* powers and functions; not subject to political interference under the guise of retaining to the people or person vested rights and privileges; nor dependent in the scope and character of its activities upon the benevolent paternalism of the Board of Education. President Churchill's aim to create an organization of representatives of the teaching staff for advisory purposes is in the right direction. But

his shot is bound to fall short, because his advisory council will have only those powers and responsibilities that the Board may see fit to give to it. Without permanent authority it will have no real responsibility. Without responsibility it becomes merely an ornament, and not an element of strength to the structure of the government of the schools.

Dangers: Notwithstanding a firm and well grounded conviction as to the practicability and the inestimable worth of an educational instrumentality such as the Supervisory Council purposes to be, continued observation and study of the current trend of public schools over the country compels an admission of the inherent dangers which such an organization conceals. The principal one of these dangers is to the profession of teaching itself; that it shall prove itself unequal to meet the larger responsibilities for the welfare of the education of the public schools. For two decades now there has been an insistent, tho almost entirely unsuccessful effort on the part of the public school teachers of our urban centres for a larger collective freedom and a wider opportunity for individual initiative. Accompanying this has been a plea to remove the work of teaching from beneath the over-weight of machinery and bureaucracy. A rational development of the Supervisory Council would result in this collective freedom and in the stimulation of that individual skill and capacity now thot to be suppressed by the mechanism of the

school. At the same time, the Supervisory Council would place the teachers of the city on trial for their independence. It will also place the Board of Education on trial to demonstrate the wisdom and honesty of its public trusteeship. It will test, moreover, the quality of the educational leadership of the City Superintendent himself.

Because the situation from which it is derived has a very direct bearing upon the whole question of the wider participation of teachers in the work of educational direction, I am constrained at this point to give reluctant expression to a severely critical judgment. The gravest danger to the integrity and efficiency of the profession of teaching in the public schools of the City of New York is to be found in the existence of that relatively small, tho extraordinarily active group of self-seekers, those exploiters of personal causes whose main interests in the educational service are not in teaching. Only by excluding these self-seekers and exploiters from any part in determining the make-up of the Supervisory Council, its activity and its performances, will it have a chance to justify its existence.

The proposal for the Supervisory Council contemplates a reconstruction of the controlling forces of the public schools that will enable the development of a *responsible freedom* by those immediately charged with the education of children. It is idealistic; it is experimental; but the supreme need justifies the trial.

QUESTIONS ON PUNISHMENT

Do I punish to relieve my feelings?
Or just because I cannot resist the impulse?
Do I punish because I feel my responsibility as the agent of Nemesis?
Or just to get even?
Do I punish to establish inhibitory associations?
Or just to show the culprit that I won't stand for any nonsense?
Do I punish for the benefit of the victim?
Or just to warn the other children?

Do I penalize spontaneity by confounding it with malice?
Do I penalize loyalty when the boy sticks by the gang and won't snitch?
Do I damn the pupil, or do I condemn his misdeeds?
Do I make the punishment fit the damage to my feelings?
Or the character of the crime?
Or the needs of the culprit?
Do I kill love for the school by making it a penal institute?

FEUDALISM IN EDUCATION

PAUL KREUZPOINTNER

Chairman Committee on Industrial Education, American Foundrymen's Association, Altoona, Pa.

IN THE JANUARY number of THE AMERICAN TEACHER the writer noticed a contribution by Professor John Dewey on "An Undemocratic Proposal." Professor Dewey calls attention to the growing sentiment in favor of a system of industrial schools, separate in management and financial support from the common school system.

The writer is well aware of this tendency, as portrayed correctly by Professor Dewey, and has himself combated this tendency, trying to suggest a middle course, for some time, being actuated in doing so by the sincere belief that, as a logical consequence of such a separation and isolation of two distinct yet closely related policies in our national educational system, a feudalism in the application of results would inevitably creep in. Sooner or later this would react injuriously upon our national progress and disastrously upon our industries.

The writer is well aware of the pinching necessity felt by our industries for properly trained labor; he is also well aware of the advantages of labor so trained that a maximum of service be obtained with as little friction as possible; he also knows of the keen competition which compels the manufacturer to exclaim that, if the vocational education needed by the men in his business is weighted down with useless ballast, (or what appears to be useless ballast) then, under the pressure of competition, the business will go down and the men with it. Upon the other hand the school people do not seem to grasp the situation, they talk in their meetings of industrial education but they are exasperatingly slow in making any move whatever to readjust the old traditional school to new conditions. They seem to fear that commercialized industrial education will crush the cultural mission of the traditional American public school.

Take for instance the recent meeting of the Pennsylvania State Educational

Association at Harrisburg, Pa., where the Educational Council offered resolutions in favor of making changes in the elementary schools. The resolutions began, "In shaping our educational practice, tradition should be fearlessly questioned." Not a single one of the perhaps 2,000 present offered to discuss the resolutions and finally one member made the remark that the teachers were so slow to change that it might be twenty years before the recommendations of the Council were carried out, and the resolutions might be laid over for a year, which was done. Now the writer has a right to say that he has always sympathized with the teachers, he had defended them against many an unjust criticism when they were made responsible for conditions for which the people and the manufacturers were responsible; he has encouraged the teachers and given them credit for their work in convention and out of convention. But he was keenly disappointed when at that convention, where they all worked so hard to perfect methods of teaching, the teachers threw away the golden opportunity to get out of the rut of method worship and in a vigorous and fearless discussion show that they understood the needs of the people and that they knew how to apply the methods of the school room to the practical necessities of every day industrial requirements, civic responsibility and social service.

But for all these discouraging features the writer has not yet lost faith in the leaven which is now working in our educational system to bring us the desired co-relation of the elementary school, the intermediate or continuation industrial school and the trade or technical high school.

A system of public education which lacks continuity in organization, which is divided into isolated or loosely connected units without closely fitting preparatory work to serve as a stepping stone for the next higher group, is not only

highly wasteful educationally, but, as in the case under consideration, this lack of co-ordination of related groups of educational activity would result in depriving the elementary school more or less of the stimulus to adjust itself, and to keep itself adjusted, to the requirements of the industrial school and vocational education.

There is universal complaint now in all industrial, shop and trade schools, of lack of preparation below. Would not an isolated system of vocational schools, looking down haughtily from its intellectual height suffer still more in this respect? If, with all the co-related work and the pressure of the university upon the college and the college upon the high school and the high school upon the grammar school, universities complain that they have to use one-fourth and even one-third of their valuable time to do high school work, do the advocates of the isolated vocational school system expect to do better?

But there is a still more serious and quite a sinister aspect of this question. The unavoidably extensive modern industrial organization requires for its maintenance and continuity a managing oligarchy on top with a semi-military shop management below. We may deplore it, we may rail against it, but that necessity cannot be avoided if the industrial machinery is to go. And as long as the necessity for carrying on a vast industrial organization exists so long will exist the necessity for a semi-military organization to manage our industries, irrespective of whether they are private concerns or communistic or socialistic.

Now, if we offer this oligarchic and semi-military industrial machinery a separate system of vocational schools, created and organized for the exclusive use of the industrial machinery, under the just and proper plea that these schools are necessary to keep up our industries and our industries are necessary to give food, shelter and clothing to the working people, then what will happen? Unconsciously the pupils in these schools will be considered proper subjects for the regulation of that education which is

best suited for the immediate needs of the industry and, amidst the fierce struggle for existence among the industries the man and citizen in the industrial worker will be neglected. Not necessarily, willfully and deliberately; but anyone who has been buffeted about in this fierce caldron of seething self-interest will know that this is unavoidable. This will eventually mean a feudalistic management of these vocational schools, it will mean a narrow, one-sided education of millions of citizens, appealing exclusively to the selfish instincts of the mass of industrial workers of the whole country, it will mean the atrophy of the nobler emotional human life, it will mean the arrested development of faculties which need cultivating in order to preserve the proper balance for a broader outlook on life with its responsibilities, as a man, as a parent, as a citizen amidst the demands of this modern complex civilization.

Let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that the top will always rule. A thousand years of industrial history proves that the mass will pull down to a lower intellectual level the more intelligent and that the mass will rule in the end and if it does not rule by intelligence, it will rule by brute force.

Now then, what can be done?

First let us all go together, manufacturers, progressive educators, corporation officers, citizens interested in the welfare of the present and the future, and bring pressure to bear upon the schools to readjust themselves to new conditions. But since we cannot wait for these results, let us establish intermediate or continuation schools such as already furnish numerous examples in Cincinnati, Buffalo, etc., so that we can give something to the 14 to 16-year-old. See to it that we get training schools of one kind or another for industrial teachers. Do not create an industrial educational aristocracy by rating it higher in the state or municipal budget than any other kind of public education, the product of which will not go into the shops after all.

Never tire in educating the taxpayer

up to the necessity of being liberal because with present rapid changes of industrial conditions we have hardly grasped the nature of one social problem when up comes another. But above all do not neglect to cultivate the industrial intelligence and confidence of the industrial worker. That does not mean

familiarity. He does not want that. What he wants is a feeling that he is not looked down upon as an inferior because he is obliged to make a living by his work. His work may have given him a narrow outlook. But he is keen after all; and for the welfare of all it is worth while to broaden his outlook.

DEMOCRACY AND PROGRESS

THE PRINCIPAL of one of the large elementary schools in New York City, seeking to satisfy his desire for improving his school as well as his own work and at the same time to indulge his instincts for democratic management, sent to eighteen of his teachers the following circular:

I have been reading Prof. McMurtry's report on schools, and am naturally interested in his comments on the work of principals in our schools. I am anxious to know whether the weaknesses mentioned by him exist in our school. If they do, they ought to be remedied—the sooner, the better. To accomplish this, teachers will please do the following: Write a statement containing

- (1) What you think are the good features in the principal's work in this school.
- (2) The bad features.
- (3) Your recommendations.

After writing out this statement, *have it copied by someone not connected with this school and whose handwriting is entirely unfamiliar to me.* I shall refuse to read any statement containing any clue whatsoever to the identity of the writer. Put the statement in a sealed envelope and send it to Mr. _____ in Room _____ Monday morning. Mr. _____ will send them to me.

THE PRINCIPAL.

Five replies have already been received; these are said by the principal to have been "very good and really helpful." Is there any reason why, in the absence of suitable machinery for democratic management, experiments of this kind can not be tried by all sincere and progressive principals?

HEALTH MEASURES FOR TEACHERS

VIGOROUS PRACTICAL MEASURES ought to be the product of definite knowledge, and such knowledge as we have suggests that we should pursue six distinct policies:

1. The establishment of an efficient health examination of candidates for entrance into professional training or practise.
2. The provision of an adequate training in sanitation and hygiene for all teachers.
3. The adoption of measures that will guarantee a distribution of teachers among lines of work that are most congenial to personal temperament, training, and taste, and therefore least injurious to physical and mental health.
4. The improvement of the physical

conditions of classroom life so as to approximate the best standards of hygiene and sanitation.

5. The betterment of the methods of school supervision and administration so that the demands of a constantly evolving school system shall be transmitted to the teacher with due regard to the personal equation in effective workmanship.

6. The fostering of an intelligent appreciation on the part of the public that teachers, just because they are in a business that is exhausting, are entitled to a normal, restful, and recreative personal and social life.—HENRY SUZZALLO, in Terman's *The Teacher's Health*.

(See THE AMERICAN TEACHER, February, 1913, p. 28.)

FREEDOM AND FREEDOM

A FRIEND writes us to protest against an editorial in the April number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, in which we said among other things that the public

expects the Board of Education to hire medical examiners and experts on eyestrain when it comes to safeguarding the health of the children—it does not expect casual devotees of Hygeia or disciples of Mary Baker Eddy to take direct charge of the health of the children.

The writer does "not believe in political, religious or medical domination"; and would not have us return to "the medieval scenes where Harvey, Galileo and Kepler and a host of others gave birth to new ideas while struggling against ecclesiastical and sectarian tyranny." Well, we do not believe in tyranny or in partisan domination either; as evidence we refer merely to the fact that we are trying to carry this magazine along. But our suspicions are aroused whenever we hear people speak of freedom. We believe in *Lehrfreiheit* and in *Lernfreiheit*; also in religious and in political liberty. But we are not sure we understand what people mean by *medical freedom*, of which a great deal has been written in this country during the past three years. To some people it seems to mean, as our correspondent puts it, "Let Smith work out his health problem in his own way, so long as he is not interfering with the right of others." But that is the crux of the whole issue. It is altogether a matter of recognizing what does and what does not affect the right of others. The scientist, working in his laboratory, tests his theories experimentally and submits his conclusions to the world for further testing and analysis. Some of us recognize the validity of the conclusions and are prepared to apply them to such practical matters as lighting houses, breeding pigs and eliminating diphtheria or smallpox. Others see nothing in the position of the scientist but a denial of their theological or political theories.

Those of us who have received training in harmony with the *thot* and method of modern science cannot see how Smith

can possibly work out his health problem himself or with the assistance merely of a healer of some kind. Those of us who have taken to heart—foolishly, perhaps—the ancient doctrine that an ounce of prophylaxis is worth a pound of therapeutics accept the administration of quarantines and disinfections and vaccinations so willingly and cheerfully that we do not consider them either arbitrary or tyrannical. We are prepared to accept the results of scientific research not because our minister and our banker and our superintendent accept them, but because we have faith in the method of the scientist and in the philosophy behind that method. We believe in freedom of *thot*, in politics and in religion, in medicine and in economics; but this does not mean, as so many seem to think it does, that there are no criteria for judging the soundness of reasoning in these fields, or for judging the validity of premises. It is not true that one person's opinion is as good as the opinion of another, altho the value of the opinion may not attach to the person's station or wealth or power.

We are opposed, as our friend writes, "to rule of and by arbitrary authority." We do not admit however that the conclusions of science are arbitrary, however mistaken this or that scientist may be. The value of typhoid vaccination is not a matter of opinion nor is it to be determined by a plebiscite. Neither, on the other hand, is the validity of the scientific method to be determined on the authority of persons distinguished in literature or art or theology. Democracy does not require that every person be free to form opinions—and to act upon them—on every conceivable subject. It requires that authority in worldly affairs be subjected to the test of standardized common sense—that is, of science.

IN MOST STATES the law requires that pupils be taught hygiene "from books in the hands of the pupil." In how many schools have the pupils a chance to apply that teaching by washing those hands before lunch?

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GABRIEL R. MASON, - - - - - *President.*
MARK HOFFMAN, - - - - - *Treasurer.*
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HENRY R. LINVILLE, - - - *Editor-in-Chief.*
BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG, - *Managing Editor.*

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This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

NOW WE ARE MOVING

GIVEN A CLEAR and definitely understood educational aim, the ability of minds to think in sequence on the proposition is not so common as to develop in idealists the habit of expectancy. They have long since learned that it is necessary to present the same ideas over and over again, waiting patiently for those who are not idealists, or who are

in the early stage of transformation, to acknowledge that there may be something in them.

We publish in this number the announced article by Prof. Edward C. Elliott on "The Supervisory Council." Those who read this article carefully and honestly will agree that the new type of administrative body is constructed to carry out the ideal of democracy in education. If to some of these this ideal does not seem of vital importance, they must remember that we pretend to have democracy in citizenship, and also that the old ideal of autocracy in education has not only failed to yield results that command respect, but has even alienated the sympathies of the people who do the work—the teachers themselves.

If there be any readers who from long habit of dealing in educational administration by that peculiar logical process called "indirection," the chances are that they will desire to shift the issue in the good old way. But the patient idealists have the consolation of realizing that every issue shifted by dishonest-minded servants of the public, and every mean advantage taken thru official opportunity to further selfish ends, hasten the educational revolution.

BIG AND LITTLE DEMOCRACIES

THE PRESIDENT of the Board of Education of New York City has invited the presidents of the local teachers' associations to meet and formulate their ideas on the organization of an Advisory Council to the Department of Education.

The actual formulation has hardly begun. Before that work is undertaken, and after it is done for that matter, anyone can make suggestions. In the first place, it would be nonsense to suppose that the Council itself should be composed of the presidents of the organizations. Some of them have been elected because they needed the place to further their own political (educational) ambitions; some hold the position because nobody else wants to bother with the necessary work; and others simply because it is their turn. So much for that.

In the second place, it would be futile to have the members of the Council appointed by the Department of Education. Teachers would not be interested in the project of extending the appointing power to the creation of the new Council.

It is being suggested that if the members of the Council are to be elected by the teachers, then the candidates should be taken from the membership of the teachers' associations. Otherwise, some reason, what is the use of having organizations?

Now, the interesting thing about this discussion is that the simplest plan that will be in harmony with the very idea of an Advisory Council is unquestionably the best plan. All grades of teachers must be represented in the Council. It is equally evident that the representation must be definitely related to the school population in the several districts. Then all the teachers in each grade of the service must be given the opportunity to *vote* for the candidate of their own grade.

If the idea of general voting becomes an issue in the conference of the presidents of the associations, we may predict beforehand that those who have little faith in democracy will say that the teachers will care nothing for the right of suffrage in educational matters, and will not vote. Whether they do or do not at first makes little difference. The significance of the opportunity remains just as great.

In order to prepare the minds of teachers for the opportunities and responsibilities that are surely coming, we propose that the organizations of teachers join in recommending to the Board of Education that a new by-law be enacted to permit each elementary and high school in the system to elect its own Advisory Council of three, five or seven members to co-operate with the Principal in the management of the school and in the development of policies. Democracy, like other living things, grows by what it feeds upon. The little democracies would bring life and power to the larger activity of the Advisory Council to the Department of Education.

POLITICS?

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

as our friend G. B. S. says

THE BILLS that made the name of McKEE famous thru the length and breadth of the land have passed the State Legislature of New York, and it now devolves upon the friends of this legislation to show that bad laws in the hands of good men are better than good laws in the hands of bad men. For the issue upon which these laws were advanced and contested were just this. The "power" to do certain things that needed to be done was abused by inaction and indifference; those who wish to do certain things for the schools of New York City had not the authority. Admitting that the things the present members of the Board of Education wish to accomplish are worthy and desirable, the question remains whether the powers granted by the new laws are not more dangerous to true democracy than the situation they seek to remedy. Admitting that the present Board of Education is free from all taint of personal and partisan bias in the conduct of the schools, the question remains whether men and women appointed by a mayor should have the authority to select officials whose qualifications should be strictly technical and subject to appraisal only by experts.

One defense often heard of greater freedom in choice of superintendents, etc., on the part of lay boards, is the analogy from the absolute freedom such boards have in the selection of the most important employe of the board, namely the city superintendent. This is, however, but defending one piece of folly by another. The fact is that city superintendents are selected by lay boards; and there are some splendid superintendents in the cities of the country. It does not follow, however, that this is the wisest way of selecting superintendents; nor that examiners and district superintendents and principals are best selected in this way. We have long ago agreed that the selection of teachers, stenographers, chemists and policemen for the public service should not be left to the judg-

ment or taste of lay officials; we have established boards of examiners to certify to the fitness of all classes of candidates for jobs in the civil and in the military service—except for the highest classes. These have been left open for the obvious reason that there can be no one higher than the highest to judge these. The assumption has been that judgment must always be by someone *higher*. And since there can be no educational expert in a system higher than the superintendent, the selection of the latter has been delegated to a lay body that knows less about the fitness of a man for this position than do many of his subordinates. By the change in the law, the Board of Education is given power to name examiners and district superintendents without the intermediation of any body of experts. This is not politics: but it can easily degenerate into politics of the worst kind. It is the sort of thing that increases the strain upon our eternal vigilance.

* * *

IN THE selection of high school principals, the Board of Superintendents of New York City has heretofore had the authority to make a nomination, and the Board of Education had the power to accept or reject the candidate thus selected by educational experts. The last nomination made by the Superintendents was rejected by the lay board on the remarkable grounds that the lay administrators had not been consulted in making the selection—that the superintendents were guilty of a "discourtesy" in failing to take counsel of these laymen. A conference between a committee of the lay board and the superintendents was arranged, and a friendly agreement was reached, the candidate originally nominated by the superintendents being again placed in nomination and appointed. This is not politics either; but it is a dangerous precedent, and one that is sure to lead to the worst kinds of abuses in the future.

* * *

THE NEWSPAPERS have reported that the men and women of the New York school system have stood together in

their support of the bills before the State Legislature directed "against Maxwell." The framers of the bill and its most prominent supporters would never admit that they were concerned with special legislation—with legislation directed against a particular person. Yet the methods of the shrewd and cynical politician were used thruout the campaign to unify support of the bills among the teachers. The widespread dissatisfaction with the personality of the city superintendent and the hope of the "lame ducks" were cleverly worked upon to give the uninformed public the impression that the "teachers" were in favor of transferring to the "progressive" board of education certain powers which a lay board should never have. The cohesive power of personal animosity seems to be as valuable an asset for the politician as that more material cement that is the despair of democracy. It may not be out of place to warn all to watch out against the contamination of the public schools; our present well-intentioned "progressives" cannot last forever.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

THE PRESIDENT of the Board of Education in one of our largest cities is reported in the press despatches to have called before him one of the school principals, and to have reprimanded her for using her position in an "attempt to influence legislation." The attempt consisted in an informal talk to her teachers called together during a noon intermission, urging them to oppose pending legislation that had been approved by the Board of Education. The president claims that his reprimand is not due to the fact that the principal advised against the measure which he supported, but to the fact that the principal used her position of authority in the school for political purposes. If the facts are as alleged—by the president—then the president was doing his duty. No official should be allowed to take advantage of his position for the purpose of influencing opinion and action on the political field; such use of power is just as

reprehensible in a school principal as it is in a priest or in a district superintendent or in the president of a school board. On the other hand the fact that one is in a position of authority should not forever silence him on matters of public or professional interest. Only one must be tactful and sensitive to the slightest misuse of status. In the case referred to, the board president while denying that his reproof was called forth by the principal's misuse of her position of authority, failed to explain why he did not take steps to restrain the political activities of one of the district superintendents who was very strenuously organizing support for the bills which the president favored, and who is commonly reported to "stand close" to the president. Sauce for the goose was formerly supposed to be sauce for the gander.

REFERRING to the report of the Hanus Committee on School Inquiry at a dinner recently, City Superintendent William H. Maxwell of New York is reported to have observed that the Committee had made only adverse criticisms, and had failed to call attention to the many important achievements of the past twelve or fifteen years. In talking the report over with schoolmen he had come to share with them the feeling expressed in the words:

"What is the use of striving if no notice is taken of the good work which has been accomplished?"

There are two answers to Mr. Maxwell's plaintive inquiry.

First: The educator who takes his work seriously must expect to do his best work under conditions that will never draw forth a word of appreciation from outsiders; if a conscientious man can gain the approval of his own best judgment, that is sufficient.

Second: What steps has Mr. Maxwell himself taken to make the teachers of his system feel that it is worth while to strive and strive and strive; why is it that hundreds of teachers in the system feel that "there is no use trying"?

WILL THEY NEVER LEARN?

A PUBLIC meeting was held recently in New York City to protest against the policy of the Board of Education in forcing married women teachers to resign on the approach of childbirth.

The old habit that many educational officials have of quibbling with formulas and trying to evade clear-cut issues was apparent again in this meeting. One of those present, a member of the Board of Education, made the statement that the decision in the now famous Edgell case was made wholly on the basis of the law, meaning that the question was one of interpreting the by-law. Those who recall the published reports of the meeting in which Mrs. Edgell was refused a leave of absence without pay to bear and rear a child, will remember that a preliminary vote was taken to prohibit discussion of the matter. Honest-minded people realize that no organized body could have any reason for voting against discussion of the interpretation of a by-law. But there might be official reasons for concealment of the opinions of the members of the Board on the real question at issue.

Happily no one at the public meeting was fooled. The insult to the intelligence was none the less definite.

IT IS necessary to remember, then, that while the construction of standards is a task of paramount importance, while it is perhaps the most promising field that the scientific study of education has so far exploited, it is not the only task that confronts us. If the history of our art teaches us anything, it is that nostrums, panaceas, and universal cure-alls in education are spares and delusions. In a field of activity so intricate and so highly complicated as ours, it is both easy and disastrous to lose the perspective. To keep this clear perspective must be our constant struggle. We must give up the notion of solving all of our problems in a day, and settle down to patient, painstaking, sober, and systematic investigation. In our craft, the attitude of finality is fatal.—Prof. W. C. Bagley, on "The Need of Standards for Measuring Progress and Results." N. E. A. Address.

KNOWNOTHINGISM AND HOPE

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

MAY WE HOPE that the extension of education will some time rid us of the pestiferous "know-nothings" that impede the wheels of progress? The know-nothing is a person who permits what he sees to obscure the vision of what he does not wish to see. He is the man who says: "I was in this country 21 years before I was allowed to vote; these foreigners are allowed to vote after they have been here only five years. That is unfair discrimination against those born in this country." He is the same one who meets any criticism directed against his country's institutions by telling you that if you don't like things as you find them, you should go back to the land of your father's birth. He is often very loyal to the community; a whole company of him, a few years ago, armed itself with shot-guns and chased the editor out of town for letting it be known that yellow fever had broken out again. He represents in practise the fable of the ostrich, which is supposed to hide his head for the purpose of excluding unpleasant information.

A very good example of fine spun know-nothingism is found in a recent book, *The child that toileth not*, which has nothing to do with your pupils. Major Thomas Robinson Dawley, Jr., who was at one time a teacher (this should not be charged against the profession, of course), was engaged by the United States Bureau of Labor to make an investigation of conditions surrounding children in the Southern mills. His report was not acceptable to the authorities, for reasons as to the validity of which there may well be differences of opinion. The Major claims that the report was "suppressed" because his findings were not satisfactory to the Bureau and to the National Child Labor Committee, who were looking for the sensational kind of stuff that serves as meat for "hired reformers, investigators and muck-rakers."

The results of two years of investigation thus "suppressed" were then published by the author himself, who as-

sumes for this occasion the title of The Gracia Publishing Company. From a comparison of conditions of life among the poor whites living in the hill country of South Carolina, with the conditions among those living in the towns and working in the mills it is obvious that the transition from the semi-barbarism of the mountains to the semi-civilization of the towns has produced a beneficial effect. In other words, the mill-workers are better off than the hill-loafers. Upon this basis we are invited to believe that child-labor is a blessing and that service in the mills is the best possible preparation for life. Indeed, Major Dawley can conceive of no better way of civilizing the mountain people than thru cotton mills that will employ their children, for here they acquire habits of industry and application, and here they come to earn a living thru honest effort!

We undoubtedly have our professional bias; but we should like to have someone try to convince us that *not-so-bad* is an acceptable substitute for *good*. The know-nothing seems always prepared to accept contentedly what is, because he can imagine worse things. We are unwilling to worship the pagan god of things-as-they-are, because we can imagine so much that is better. It is not often that a trained mind operates in the manner of the know-nothing; but a good example was furnished some three years ago by Dr. Charles Wardell Stiles, of the United States Public Health Service. Dr. Stiles had made an international reputation for himself as the discoverer of the "hook-worm" and of its relation to the characteristic laziness and inefficiency of so many of the Southern "crackers." In the course of his investigations he found that the sanitary arrangements surrounding the cotton-mills were so good that the children working in the mills had but a slight chance to become infected, whereas the children left at home in the hills, in unsanitary surroundings, among monstrous accumulations of filth and ignorance and superstition, were subject to almost universal in-

fection and constant re-infection. The conclusion that Dr. Stiles allowed the public to draw from his comparison, and that he himself actually drew for the public, was that child-labor in the mills was a blessing to the children, and should not be discouraged! With our bias we should have drawn the conclusion that society has the knowledge and the material resources for converting the children of the crackers into healthy, happy, intelligent, capable human beings.

However, there is hope. For Dr. Stiles is now more concerned with bring-

ing physical and moral and mental health to these disinherited victims of past ignorance and stupidity and greed, than he is with defending the present iniquities of child exploitation in the name of Things-might-be-worse. His observations on the conditions surrounding the rural-school teacher in large sections of the South are full of suggestions to all teachers, North as well as South, city as well as country. The following is an article that appeared in *Public Health Reports* for February 7:

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL TEACHER

IF A COUNTY superintendent of education gives an address before a State convention he does not seem to feel that he has done his full duty (judging from a number of meetings that it has been my privilege to attend within the last few years) unless he says something about the inefficiencies of the country school teachers, a few years during which they remain in the work, and the fact that many of them teach simply in order to earn money for their wedding trousseau.

While I would not for a moment presume to be capable of debating with the gentlemen in question, it is difficult to escape the impression that theirs is not the only point of view in the premises. Many years of field work in the rural districts have given me an opportunity to see a great many rural schools and their teachers, and as a practical sanitarian I take the liberty of presenting for consideration a side of the problem which I have not yet heard county superintendents emphasize in their convention addresses.

First of all, the point so often made that these young women teach but a few years and then marry might well be interpreted as meaning that they are of such a high standard that they are in great demand as wives—an interpretation which should be heartily indorsed.

Certain it is that the average young woman has few inducements offered to her to remain a teacher in the many country schools I have seen. As a rule, she leaves a home which is superior to the homes of the parents of her pupils in which she is forced to board if she lives in the community where

she teaches. She is paid a miserable salary as reward for exposing herself five days a week to indecent and insanitary conditions surrounding the school which jeopardize and occasionally end either her health or her life. She is blamed by her patrons for not giving a better education than she succeeds in giving to unhealthy children who on an average are not physically or mentally capable of digesting the education she does give to them. She has little or no sympathy from her school board in regard to the difficulties that she faces. If she suggests improvements in the sanitary surroundings, her suggestions usually fall upon deaf ears. She is superior in education, refinement, culture, and in nearly every other respect, to the majority of parents in the community in which she teaches. She lives a life of self-sacrifice, too often combined with indigestion and pimples, because of the class of food she is forced to eat. If she sends home from school a pupil who has the itch or in whom she suspects some contagious disease, she is blamed for her officiousness; if she contracts the disease herself, she furnishes a substitute at her own expense.*

But she is the greatest civilizing influence

*For instance, two of the three young women teaching in the rural school where I am studying the children, the day this short article is written, have just contracted itch from their pupils and have the honor of paying a substitute. There is no medical inspection of the children, and the teacher was blamed for sending home a boy infected with scabies, but sentiment would be distinctly against the teachers if they themselves were known to attend school when they had this infection.

to-day in our rural districts and is deserving of much more sympathy and support and of much less criticism than she is receiving.

Without denying that a more pedagogically trained class of teachers might be obtained if they were paid better salaries, I venture to suggest to their critics that they will probably be able to retain their young women a year or two longer if they improve the present indecent and insanitary conditions under which these young women have to work to a point where the girls can teach without endangering their health and lives; and these teachers will certainly have better success in their pedagogic efforts if the sanitary conditions surrounding the schools are improved to a point where the country school will not form—what it is to-day—the great disease-spreading center for rural and semirural communities.

In conclusion, I can not refrain from mentioning what may be admitted to be an extreme and somewhat exceptional case: A young woman from a town contracted to teach in a rather remote country school. She was advised to engage board with the family

of the chairman of the local school board and did so before leaving home. Upon arriving at her destination she was shown into the one-room house, containing five beds, and was asked which bed she preferred to occupy.

All honor to our country school-teachers, who are to-day the greatest factors for good in our rural districts.

THE PROCEEDINGS of the Second National Conference on Vocational Guidance are to be published early in May. Copies at one dollar net, may be ordered from Benj. C. Gruenberg, Commercial High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

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